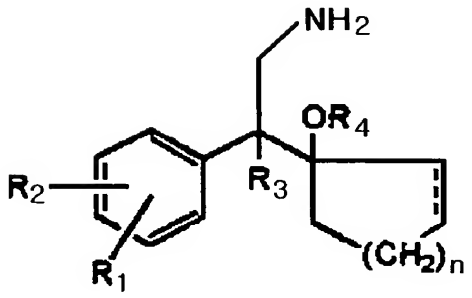
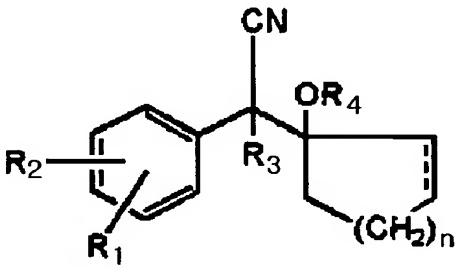
In the claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula I,



(I)

wherein R_1 and R_2 are ortho or para substituents, independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxyl, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_7-C_9 aralkoxy, C_2-C_7 alkanoyloxy, C_1-C_6 alkylmercapto, halo and trifluoromethyl; R_3 is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl ; R_4 is hydrogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, formyl or C_2-C_7 alkanoyl; n is one of the integers 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4; and the dotted line represents optional olefinic unsaturation;
comprising, hydrogenating a compound of formula III,



(III)

in the presence of an alkaline nickel or cobalt catalyst at a temperature of about 10°C to about 20°C.

Claim 2 (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the catalyst is Raney-Ni.

Claims 3 – 4 (Cancelled)

Claim 5 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein hydrogenation is carried out in the presence of methanol, ethanol or isopropyl alcohol.

Claim 6 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein the amount of catalyst is from about 10 to about 50% by weight based on the amount of the compound of formula III.

Claim 7 (Original) The process of Claim 6 wherein the amount of catalyst is from about 30 to about 50% by weight based on the amount of the compound of formula III.

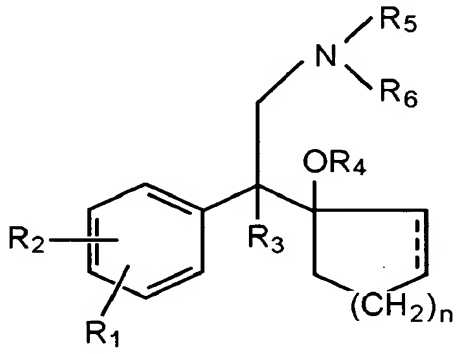
Claim 8 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein R_1 is hydrogen, hydroxyl, C_1-C_3 alkoxy, chloro, bromo, trifluoromethyl or C_1-C_3 alkyl; R_2 is C_1-C_3 alkyl, C_1-C_3 alkoxy, chloro, bromo, trifluoromethyl or C_2-C_3 alkanoyloxy; R_3 is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl; and R_4 is hydrogen.

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim10 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein the compound of Formula I is 1-[2-amino-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)ethyl]cyclohexanol.

Claim 11 (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein the compound of Formula I is 1-[2-amino-1-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]cyclohexanol.

Claim 12 (Original) The process of Claim 1 further comprising alkylating the compound of formula (I) to provide compound of Formula (II)



(II)

wherein R_1 and R_2 are ortho or para substituents, independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxyl, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_7-C_9 aralkoxy, C_2-C_7

alkanoyloxy, C_1-C_6 alkylmercapto, halo and trifluoromethyl; R_3 is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl ; R_4 is hydrogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, formyl or C_2-C_7 alkanoyl; R_5 is hydrogen or C_1-C_6 alkyl; R_6 is C_1-C_6 alkyl; n is one of the integers 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4; and the dotted line represents optional olefinic unsaturation.

Claim 13 (Original) The process of Claim 12, further comprising conversion of the compound of formula (II) to a pharmaceutically acceptable salt.

Claim 14 (Original) The process according to Claim 13, wherein the compound of formula II is venlafaxine, O-desmethylvenlafaxine, N-desmethylvenlafaxine, N,N-didesmethylvenlafaxine, N,O-didesmethylvenlafaxine or O-desmethyl-N,N-didesmethylvenlafaxine, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claims 15 – 19 (Cancelled)